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For Immediate Release

**CHAIRWOMAN ROSENWORCEL UNVEILS RULES TO SAFEGUARD
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS BY IMPROVING ACCESS TO
SAFE AND AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY**

*Proposes Significant Steps to Enhance Privacy for Survivors and Facilitate
Communication Access*

WASHINGTON, October 23, 2023—Federal Communications Commission Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel [announced](#) at the National Conference on Domestic Violence yesterday that she will be sharing with her colleagues an Order that would help domestic violence survivors access safe and affordable connectivity. The proposed rules would implement key provisions in the Safe Connections Act of 2022 to support survivors of domestic abuse and other related crimes seeking to maintain critical connections with friends, family, and support networks. The newly unveiled rules follow the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted earlier this year seeking comment on implementation of the Safe Connections Act and how FCC programs might help survivors of domestic violence and other harmful abuse get access to connectivity services, building on the work the Commission initiated in July 2022 to support the connectivity needs of survivors.

“For those affected by domestic violence and abuse, a phone is a life saver. It makes it possible to get help when in dangerous situations. It is a gateway to building a new life, away from harm,” **said FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel.** “These efforts are a critical step in ensuring that survivors stay connected to their support systems and loved ones and I'm proud to have made this work a priority for the agency.”

If adopted at the Commission’s November 15, 2023 public open meeting, the Order would:

- Help survivors by requiring providers to separate phone lines linked to family plans where the abuser is on the account;
- Protect the privacy of survivors by requiring providers to block records of calls or text messages to hotlines and other support services for survivors of domestic violence, and;
- Provide support for survivors who suffer from financial hardship through the FCC’s Lifeline program.

As survivors navigate difficult circumstances, access to communications services is critically important, especially since many survivors may not have direct control over their mobile phone plans, which may still be managed by their abusers. Survivors whose devices and associated telephone numbers are part of multi-line or shared plans can face difficulties separating lines from such plans and maintaining affordable service as they try to move on with their lives.

Despite a need to access federal assistance programs, survivors may be hesitant to pursue these for fear of retaliation. Having access to an independent phone connection is important for survivors to be able to communicate and access other available services without fear of their communications, location, or other private information being revealed to their abusers.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).